

ACCOUNT
OF A
NEW METHOD
OF
TANNING.

INVENTED BY
DR. DAVID MACBRIDE.

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SOME
A C C O U N T
O F A
NEW METHOD
O F
T A N N I N G.

WHEREBY

Leather is improved in its Quality, tanned in one third of the Time required by the Common Process, and with a Saving of One Fourth in the Expence of tanning Materials.

INVENTED BY

DAVID MACBRIDE.

Of the City of *Dublin*, Doctor of Physic.

And by him submitted to the Consideration of
Parliament.

D U B L I N :

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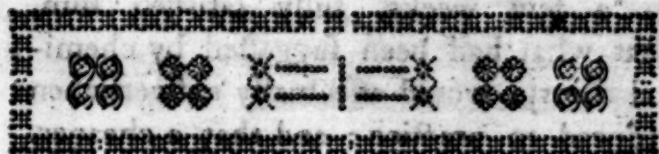
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STUDY OF THE





Some Account of a *New* *Method of Tanning, &c.*

THE Principles on which this new method of Tanning is founded, are derived from Chemistry, and were found out some years ago, during a Course of Experiments instituted purely for medical purposes : It was not, however, until *October* 1767, that the Discoverer thought of applying these principles to the improvement of an art so totally unconnected with that which is the object of his profession.

HIS first experiments were made at home, on small pieces of Calf-skin ; and, in a few weeks, fully satisfied him, that what had been suggested by chemical theory, would effectually answer when reduced to practice : and that a cheaper, and more expeditious method, than what has hitherto been known, might easily be introduced into the common tanneries ; by which considerable advantages would necessarily accrue to the publick ; as a great part of the price, which the consumer pays for tanned leather, is to be charged to the length of time that the Tanner is obliged to lie out of his money, by reason of the tediousness of the present process.——The heaviest kinds of leather requiring not less than two years, before the manufacture can be brought to perfection.

BUT though these first trials sufficiently convinced the Discoverer of the general practicability of his method ; yet, he very well knew, that the Publick would never be convinced, unless it could
be

be shewn, that common workmen, in the ordinary course of business, could also carry it on : He therefore determined to trust his secret to some Tanner of reputation, and employ him to make trials with all the different kinds of leather.

THE person chosen for this purpose, was Mr. *William Laban* of Mill-street, who has carried on the tanning business for upwards of thirty years.

FROM the little specimens of leather which were shewn him, and having the nature of the new process explained, Mr. *Laban* immediately saw that this discovery would answer the expectation; and though, at that very period, he was on the point of quitting the tanning business, had suffered his stock of bark to run out, and actually sold off his utensils; he was so struck with the efficacy and simplicity of the method now shewn him, that he altered his scheme, and resolved to re-assume the trade.—Accordingly, as soon as Mr. *Laban* could get matters prepared, he began to try the new me-

thod with a few Calf-skins, such as, in the common way, require from four to six months, before they can be completely tanned.

THIS was in the beginning of January 1768—during a series of frosty weather, which is known to retard the process of tanning : nevertheless, at the end of four weeks, these skins were found to be thoroughly tanned.

AFTER having been properly dressed by the currier, one of these calf-skins was exhibited to the DUBLIN SOCIETY—where, being examined by persons skilled in the leather manufacture (who were desired to attend for that purpose) it was pronounced to be well and sufficiently tanned, and judged to be excellent in respect of quality.

THE SOCIETY, in consequence of this exhibition, desired Mr. *Laban* to make the necessary alterations in his tanyard for trying the new method on all the different kinds of leather, and appointed a Committee to superintend the Experiments.

FROM

FROM this time, Mr. *Laban* began to tan Calf-skins, in large quantities,—and, in the course of the ensuing summer, tanned a parcel of heavy leather; all under the inspection of the Committee, who visited his tan-yard, and observed the progress of the work: with which they were so entirely satisfied, that, on their report, and the exhibition of several specimens of leather made from hides and skins of various sizes, the SOCIETY gave Mr. *Laban* a bounty of Fifty Pounds — “ in consideration of his
 “ Satisfactory Experiments, and in recom-
 “ pence for the Expences he has been at
 “ in making the necessary alterations in
 “ his Tan-yard.”

FROM the Committee's report, and this Exhibition before the SOCIETY, it appeared, that the leather of the new tannage is of a quality superior to that of the common tannage; that, in general, it may be manufactured in one third of the time required by the old process; and, that though there be not near so great a consumption of oak bark as in the common method, yet, the expence of the new discovered materials, and of the
 utensils

atensils for preparing them, is so trifling, that it cannot amount to more than five shillings *per cent.* on the value of the goods tanned.

THIS cheap and expeditious Method of Tanning being thus sufficiently authenticated and established, the Discoverer is willing to forego the profits which an exclusive Patent would secure to him, and is ready to give up his secret to the Publick, for such recompence, as the Wisdom and Generosity of Parliament shall deem adequate to the importance of his invention.

IT appears from the Estimate annexed, that leather tanned in the new method, may be sold, above Twenty *per cent.* cheaper, than the Tanner can afford, who works in the tedious way hitherto known and practised: the persons, however, possessed of this new method, like all other men in trade, will always take as high prices for their goods, as the market will afford;— and therefore, until the whole Body of Tanners, throughout the Nation, shall be instructed how to carry the new discovered improvements

ments into practice, the Publick will reap no advantage;—but if every Tanner in Ireland were to manufacture his leather according to the new Method, it is plain to a demonstration, that the price of this necessary commodity must in general fall twenty *per cent.*—for, when every dealer is on a par, the price of Goods, like the rising of Water, can never mount higher than its natural level. Now since this new method of Tanning is perfectly simple, requires little additional apparatus or alteration, and may be introduced into the common Tan-yards, immediately, without any loss of the materials already in use; while those materials which have been discovered, and, are to be added, either grow spontaneously, or may be always purchased at a low price, in every part of the country. It is equally demonstrable, that if the Secret were once published, there is not a Tanner in the kingdom who would not begin to practise the New Method, as soon as he could provide himself with the necessary apparatus and materials;—for tho' common tradesmen of all denominations, are, in general, rather averse to the pursuit of new schemes, and apt to despise improve-
ments

ments proposed by people of other professions ; it can hardly be imagined, that any man will be so obstinate, and blind to his own interest, as not to embrace an opportunity when it is offered, which will enable him to turn his capital stock, three times, for once, that he can do at present.

THE benefits which must accrue to Ireland in particular (from such a reduction in the price of leather) with respect to foreign trade—as well as in regard to home consumption, are too obvious to require being pointed out.—It is therefore, not to be doubted, but every Member of the Legislature will readily concur in procuring for his Country such solid advantages.

*An ESTIMATE of the Advantages
of the NEW METHOD of TANNING.*

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
If 667 Hides at 30 <i>s.</i> be laid in, the original cost will be	1000	10	0
To tan these completely, in the <i>common</i> way of tanning, each hide will require one barrel of Bark. 667 bar- rels Bark, at 8 <i>s.</i> ———	266	16	0
If the Rent of the Tan-yard be 30 <i>l.</i> <i>per annum</i> , as the leather will not be tanned in less than a Year and a half, this charge will a- mount to ——— ———	45	0	0
Three men, at least, will be required to manufacture this parcel of Hides ;— their wages will be (nearly) —	60	0	0
	1372	6	0
To this sum of 1372 6 0, add, for simple interest of <i>one thousand pounds</i> , for 18 months — — —	90	0	0
— do. for cash paid for Bark	20	0	0
Whole expence to the Tanner	1482	6	0

In the NEW METHOD.

	<i>l.</i>	<i>s.</i>	<i>d.</i>
667 Hides laid in at 30s.	1000	10	0
As there is a Saving, of at least one quarter of the Bark in the New Method of tanning, 500 Barrels will be sufficient : the expence in that article will be, but	200	0	0
As the Tannage will be complete in Six Months, instead of Eighteen, the charge for Rent will be, but	15	0	0
Mens wages for six months	20	0	0
	1235	10	0
To which add, for new discovered Materials	5	0	0
Interest on 1000 <i>l.</i> for six Months	30	0	0
Do. on 200 <i>l.</i> for do.	6	0	0
Whole Expence to the Tanner	1276	10	0

N. B. To avoid fractions, the interest is not calculated on the whole Cost of the Bark ; nor at all charged on the Rent, or Mens Wages ; as these sums are not (like the purchase of the raw hides) paid down at once.

When

When the Tanner who works in the *Old way*, brings his goods to market at the end of *Eighteen Months*, let him be allowed to charge for Profit, 25 *per cent.* (or £370 0 0) on the gross sum of £1480.—The Consumer then will pay for the 667 tanned hides £1850.—

L s d
1480 0 0
370 0 0

1850 0 0

But the Tanner who works in the *New way*, when he comes to sell his Parcel of Leather, at the end of *six Months*,—though he be allowed to charge even *ten per cent.* (or £127 12 0) on the gross sum of £1276.—The Consumer will buy the 667 Hides for £1403 12 0—

1276 0 0
127 12 0

1403 12 0

THUS

Thus it plainly appears, that there is an additional Profit to the Tanner; and yet the Consumer will buy his leather so, as to save, £ 446—out of £ 1850.—which is somewhat more than Three-pence out of a Shilling.

BUT even supposing that leather be reduced only *Twenty per cent.* by the general introduction of the New Method of Tanning, as the number of People in this Kingdom, who wear Shoes, may be safely estimated at One Million,—This Million may be allowed, at the least, to consume one with another Ten Shillings worth of Leather;—the annual Saving therefore, in this indispensable Article, to the whole Nation, would be One hundred thousand Pounds.



